

Anne Bonny

(1690? - 1720?)

The two most famous women pirates, Anne Bonny and Mary Read, both sailed on the same ship with Captain "Calico Jack" Rackum. Both women dressed in men's clothing most of their lives. They were both as fierce and courageous as any of the Caribbean pirates.

Anne Bonny was born in Ireland. While still a young girl, she and her parents moved to South Carolina. Her father left the legal profession and became a successful merchant. Soon he bought a large plantation and became one of the wealthiest citizens of Charleston.

Neighbors remembered Bonny for her temper. One story often told is that during her youth, in a fit of temper, she stabbed a servant girl with a table knife.

Bonny's parents raised her to be a proper lady in Charleston society. However, she preferred to be a tomboy. Society offered little opportunity for young women to break away from their traditional roles of the day. She fell in love with a poor ruffian and married against her father's wishes. When her father learned of this, he disinherited her. Soon, Bonny and her husband moved to New Providence in the Bahamas. There she soon met several pirates, including one named "Calico Jack" Rackum.

Rackum persuaded Bonny to leave her husband, join him, and become a pirate. Women were not welcome on pirate ships, however. Many pirates believed that having a woman on their ship would bring them bad luck. Because of this superstition, Bonny dressed in men's clothes before she joined the crew of Rackum's ship. They raided several ships, and Bonny fought as hard as any of the men. Another woman pirate, Mary Read, soon joined Rackum's crew. Often the two women fought side by side.

Officials finally tracked down Rackum and his crew in late October 1720. A British naval vessel attacked Rackum's ship, but during the battle, the pirates became too drunk to fight. Bonny and Read continued to fight until the very end of the battle. Finally the officials defeated the pirates and arrested all of them.

During their trials, the courts found Rackum, Bonny, Read, and the rest of the crew members guilty of piracy and sentenced them to hang. The lack of courage of the male pirates still upset Bonny. On the day of Rackum's execution, Bonny told him that if he had fought like a man, they would not be hanging him like a dog.

Shortly before her scheduled hanging, Bonny received a reprieve. She discovered that she was expecting a child. The law did not allow the killing of an unborn child. Bonny remained in prison for a short time, but was eventually released. Bonny's father may have paid for her release. Many historians believe she returned to Charleston with her father. Others believe that she repented her pirate life and returned to her husband.

After her release, Bonny disappeared from history. No one knows what finally happened to the most celebrated woman pirate in history.



Name _____ Date _____

Questions for Consideration

1. What was Captain Rackum's nickname?

2. Who, other than Anne Bonny, was the woman pirate mentioned in the article?

3. Where was Bonny born?

4. Where did Bonny's family move while she was still a young girl?

5. What were two professions of Bonny's father?

6. What did neighbors remember about Bonny?

7. What did Bonny once do to a servant girl?

8. Why did her father disinherit Anne?

9. Bonny and her husband moved to New Providence. Where is this New Providence located?

10. What happened in October of 1720?

11. What punishment did the courts give to Bonny and the other pirates?

12. What was the last thing Bonny said to Rackum?

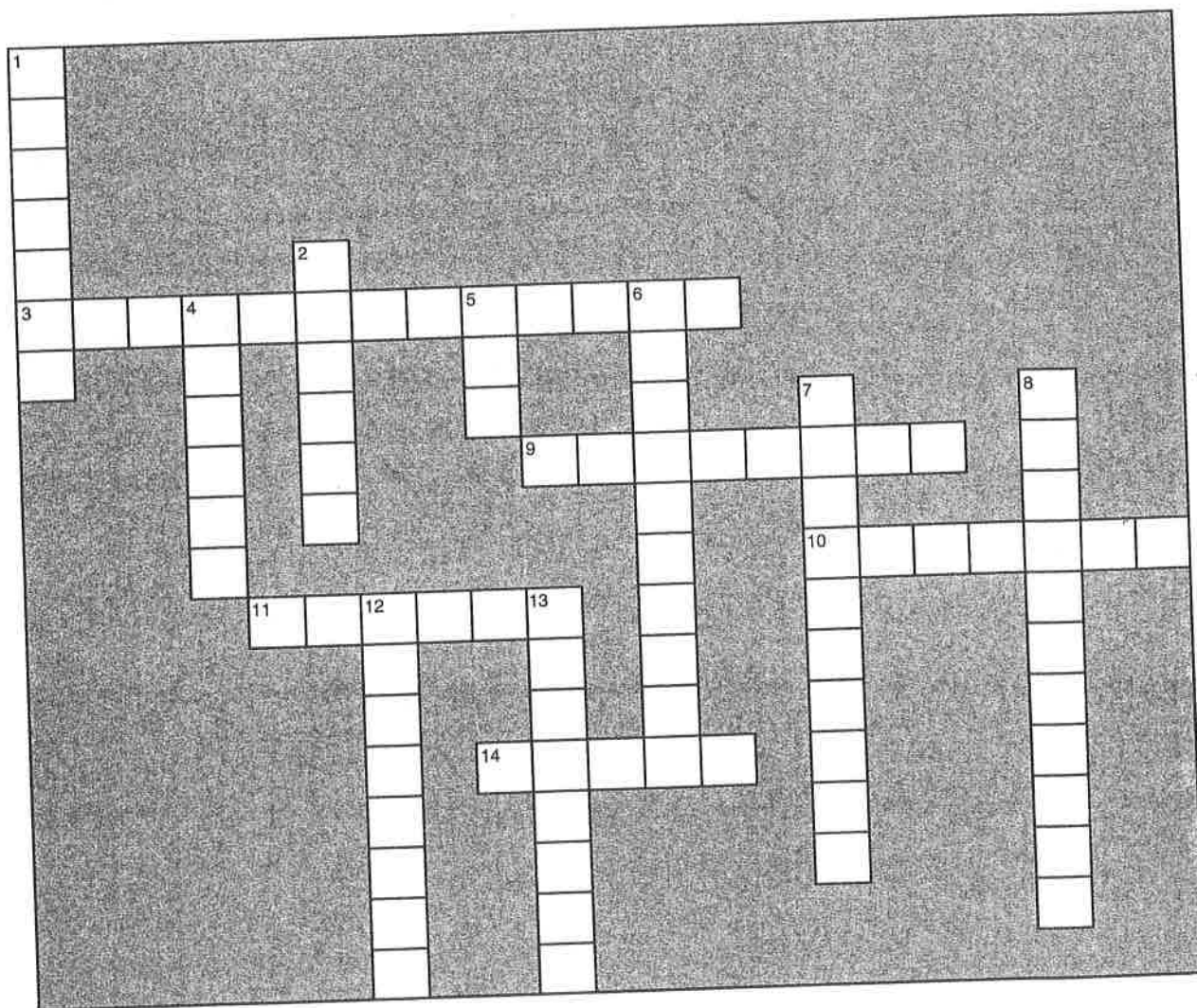
13. What finally happened to Bonny?

Name _____

Date _____

Crossword Puzzle

Use the clues below to complete the puzzle. You can find the answers in the narrative about Anne Bonny.

**ACROSS**

3. Where Bonny and her husband went after she was disinherited (two words)
9. Occupation of Bonny's father
10. The country of Bonny's birth
11. Neighbors remembered Bonny for her _____.
14. Rackum and his crew were too _____ to fight.

DOWN

1. Punishment to which the courts sentenced Bonny
2. Instead of becoming a lady, Bonny preferred to be this before becoming a pirate.
4. What Bonny was convicted of
5. Bonny said that if Rackum had fought like a man, they would not be hanging him like a _____.
6. Town where Bonny grew up
7. The pirate Rackum's nickname (two words)
8. Bonny _____ from history after being released from prison.
12. This woman fought next to Bonny. (two words)
13. What Bonny received before her sentence was carried out